

National carbon pricing plan faces skepticism, survey finds; 43% of Canadians say they disapprove, while 35% unaware of details

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Body

The majority of Canadians either don't approve or are not aware of the federal government's carbon pricing plan, suggests a new survey by Forum Research. The results were based on a Jan. 7 telephone poll of 1226 randomly selected Canadians over the age of 18.

Forty-three per cent of those surveyed said they disapprove and an additional 35 per cent said they were not aware of the details of the pricing plan. The numbers did not change much when the pricing plan was called a "carbon tax."

"No matter what it seems to be called, Canadians are skeptical of the Feds' carbon pricing plan," said Forum president Lorne Bozinoff.

The survey does not measure the reasons for the opposition and lack of awareness.

The federal government's carbon price plan has two prongs:

A pricing system for heavy emitters in industries like cement and fertilizer production. Companies in these industries get a set amount of emissions tax-free.

Firms that emit less than their industry allotment will receive credits. Firms that emit more than their industry allotment can either buy credits from their competitors or pay the federal tax.

A fuel tax on everything from aviation turbo fuel to gasoline and combustible waste. This tax starts in April at \$20 per tonne of greenhouse gas emissions. It is scheduled to go up \$10 per year until 2022, when it is \$50 per tonne.

The plan applies to Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and New Brunswick - jurisdictions without their own carbon price plan that meets federal standards.

Rebates will be paid to people in affected provinces as "climate action incentives" that should exceed the expected cost of the tax for households, a government official has said.

The average family of four in Ontario will receive around \$300 from Ottawa in 2019, a payout that exceeds the expected \$240 cost increases associated with the tax, the official said. The payouts will grow to \$718 for a four-person household in 2022, as the carbon tax increases and the government expects average annual costs for a family of four to hit \$564, the official had said.

Among the two-thirds of respondents who said they were aware of the plan, slightly more than half, or 54 per cent, disapprove. The poll's margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points 19 times out of 20. Even with the

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new federal carbon pricing plan, according to government projections, Canada is not on track to meet its 2030 Paris Agreement emissions target.

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